

VA. I also authored legislation that passed the Senate to make sure that we are not surprised by this kind of news in the future.

Second, we need to ensure that the VA's budget is not dependent on the political whims inside Washington. I believe we need to make VA funding mandatory so that VA never has to ration care and veterans never have to worry about losing their coverage.

Colorado's veterans deserve a new state-of-the-art veterans hospital at Fitzsimons. When negotiations between the VA, the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority, and the University of Colorado broke down, I was proud to step in and help restart negotiations. This remains one of my top priorities in the Senate, and I am optimistic about the hospital's prospects. Colorado's veterans will get a new VA medical center at Fitzsimons.

But veterans in the metro area are not the only ones who need better care. In many rural parts of Colorado, veterans are being forced to drive hundreds of miles to get basic health care at overutilized facilities. This distance can lead to delayed care. And in the case of our aging veterans, the trip can be damaging to their health. That is just unacceptable.

Across Colorado, many brave and dedicated State officials and veterans groups are providing transportation services to rural veterans. Such volunteer programs currently exist in Alamosa, Denver, La Plata, Moffat, Prowers, and Weld counties. These are successful, but financial uncertainties put them in jeopardy.

I am proud to have introduced the VetsRide Act to help programs like these survive. The bill provides small grants to groups that provide transportation or otherwise assist veterans in rural areas. This bill has earned the support of 17 Senate cosponsors including 8 Republicans. I hope to get this legislation approved so that we can continue these transportation programs that are a lifeline to our rural veterans.

In August, I hosted a field hearing on rural veterans issues in Grand Junction. Based on that hearing, I introduced legislation to require the VA to reevaluate outdated policies that disadvantage rural areas in the placement of new VA clinics. In September the Senate passed that legislation, which hopefully will help clear the way for the veterans of northwestern Colorado to get a clinic that they deserve.

In addition, I have introduced critical legislation to improve care for veterans living in rural areas, blinded veterans, and our elderly veterans. These are three areas where the VA is not doing enough, and a relatively small investment can make a major difference in our heroes' quality of life.

As we celebrate this Veterans Day, I am reminded of a sad fact. By 2015, the veteran population in Colorado is expected to fall by 49,500. Most of those will be World War II and Korean War

veterans who will take their rightful places of honor next to the heroes buried in the four veterans cemeteries spread across Colorado.

I believe we need to honor the men and women who sacrificed so much for our freedom by giving them a burial option close to their homes. Yet one of the Nation's largest veterans communities, Colorado Springs, does not have a veterans cemetery. There are more than 105,000 veterans in the Pikes Peak Region. Despite this, the nearest veterans cemetery is at Fort Logan, a 70-mile trip from Springs through heavy Denver traffic. I have cosponsored legislation that would fix this inequity and hope it will be passed by the Congress.

I have also cosponsored legislation this week to close a terrible loophole in the law that allows capital offenders to be buried at national cemeteries. Our veterans deserve the dignity of not being buried next to murderers and monsters.

Since the American Revolution, nearly 1.2 million American soldiers have died defending this country. Their valor is an example to us. It requires us, the living, to ensure that the country they fought for continues to be worthy of their sacrifice.

Colorado and the Nation will not forget what our veterans have done and continue to do for us. We owe veterans our gratitude and our lifelong support.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 305) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 305

Whereas tens of millions of Americans have served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the past century;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Americans have given their lives while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during the past century;

Whereas the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States have been vital in maintaining our freedom and way of life;

Whereas the more than 700,000 brave Americans who have sacrificed their lives while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States have ensured that the Nation, which is founded on the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy, shall endure;

Whereas Armistice Day was first proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 to commemorate the November 11, 1918, armistice between the Allies and the Central Powers that ended the fighting of World War I;

Whereas on June 1, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law the Act proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day (Public Law 83-380);

Whereas on October 8, 1954, in anticipation of the first nationwide observance of Veterans Day, President Dwight D. Eisenhower

issued a Presidential proclamation regarding Veterans Day, which states, "[o]n that day let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain";

Whereas veterans play important roles in communities throughout the United States;

Whereas it is important to preserve the memory of the veterans of the Nation and to teach every generation about the sacrifices that all veterans have made in securing and preserving the freedom that all Americans enjoy today;

Whereas the United States is in a time of conflict that highlights the incommensurable sacrifices the brave men and women of our Armed Forces have made and continue to make for our Nation and its principles of freedom, justice, and democracy;

Whereas as of October 2005, there were 433,398 new veterans from the present conflict who bravely defended America;

Whereas November 11 is a day of solemn reflection on, and commemoration of, the contributions of those who have served and defended the Nation, especially those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to secure the freedoms enjoyed by all citizens; and

Whereas it is proper that the Senate observe the day with appropriate tributes, commemorations, and reflection even when it conducts the Nation's business: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate—

(1) that those that have died in war serving the Nation, and the veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, living and dead, are to be honored for their contributions and sacrifices to preserve the Nation and the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy that all Americans hold dear;

(2) that Veterans Day 2005 should be commemorated with appropriate tributes to all veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States for their contributions and sacrifices, and most especially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

(3) that all Americans are encouraged to join the Senate in honoring and paying tribute to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States on Veterans Day and throughout the year.

RECOGNIZING THAT VETERANS DAY IS A DAY TO HONOR ALL VETERANS OF THE ARMY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 306, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 306) recognizing that Veterans Day is a day to honor all veterans of the Army and to support the Army Freedom Team Salute's mission to recognize the unsung heroes who have served this country.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in

the RECORD, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 306) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 306

Whereas Army personnel have for 230 years answered the call to duty by becoming guardians and defenders of America's freedoms;

Whereas millions of Army veterans selflessly served this Nation and their legacy of duty has reigned in their continued support of the mission of the Army;

Whereas the Army appreciates the sacrifices these courageous men and women have made in answering the call to duty by choosing a life of service;

Whereas the 83rd Congress created Veterans Day as a national day of observance to commemorate the heroes who served in the Armed Forces and the Army recognizes the importance of honoring those who have served their country; and

Whereas the Army created the Freedom Team Salute program to provide a way for the United States and the Army to thank its veterans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes that November 11, 2005, Veterans Day, is a day to honor all Army veterans and supports the Army Freedom Team Salute's mission to recognize the unsung heroes who have served this country.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 307, which was submitted early today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 307) to recognize and honor the Filipino World War II veterans for their defense of democratic ideals and their important contribution to the outcome of World War II.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 307) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 307

Whereas in 1898, the Philippines Archipelago was acquired by the United States of America, became an organized United States territory in 1902, and, in preparation for her independence, a self-governing commonwealth in 1935;

Whereas the people of the Philippines and of the United States developed strong ties throughout the decades-long democratic

transition of the island, compelling the United States to assume the responsibilities of defending the archipelago and protecting the people of the Philippines;

Whereas on July 26, 1941, anticipating the aggression of Japanese invasion forces in the Asia Pacific region, as well as the imminent conflict between the United States and Japan, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a military order, calling the organized military forces of the Government of Commonwealth of the Philippines into armed service under the command of United States Army officers led by General Douglas MacArthur;

Whereas on December 7, 1941, the Japanese Government began a devastating 4-year war with the United States with their stealth bombing attacks of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and Clark Air Field, Philippines, and led to the loss of tens of thousands of American and Filipino soldiers and countless civilian casualties;

Whereas on February 20, 1946, President Harry Truman stated, "Philippine Army veterans are nationals of the United States and will continue in that status until July 4, 1946. They fought, as American nationals, under the American flag, and under the direction of our military leaders. They fought with gallantry and courage under most difficult conditions. I consider it a moral obligation of the United States to look after the welfare of the Philippine Army veterans.";

Whereas on October 17, 1996, President William J. Clinton issued a proclamation on the anniversary of the 1944 return of United States forces under General MacArthur to liberate the Philippines and said, "I urge all Americans to recall the courage, sacrifice, and loyalty of Filipino Veterans of World War II and honor them for their contribution to our freedom.";

Whereas on July 26, 2001, President George W. Bush, in his greetings to the Filipino WWII veterans said, "More than 120,000 Filipinos fought with unwavering loyalty and great gallantry under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. The combined United States-Philippine forces distinguished themselves by their valor and heroism in defense of freedom and democracy. Thousands of Filipino soldiers gave their lives in the battles of Bataan and Corregidor. These soldiers won for the United States the precious time needed to disrupt the enemy's plan for conquest in the Pacific. During the three long years following these battles, the Filipino people valiantly resisted a brutal Japanese occupation with an indomitable spirit and steadfast loyalty to America.";

and Whereas the contributions of the Filipino people, and the sacrifices of their soldiers in World War II, have not been fully recognized: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate reaffirms, recognizes, and honors the Filipino World War II veterans for their defense of American democracy and their important contribution to the victorious outcome of World War II.

DESIGNATING 2006 AS THE "YEAR OF STUDY ABROAD"

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 308, submitted early today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 308) designating 2006 as the "Year of Study Abroad."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support a Senate resolution designating 2006 as the "Year of Study Abroad." This resolution encourages initiatives to promote and expand study-abroad opportunities. Now more than ever, America needs citizens who can understand and communicate with people all over the world. However, fewer than 1 percent of all U.S. undergraduates participate in study-abroad programs while nearly 600,000 international students from more than 200 countries study in the United States each year. The future of our Nation depends on our ability to prepare the next generation of leaders for an increasingly complex global society.

This resolution seeks to promote study-abroad experiences as valuable opportunities for exposure to global knowledge and cultural understanding. An education that includes study abroad not only opens doors to careers, it opens minds and worlds of possibility. Studying abroad can help students develop foreign language proficiency, improve decisionmaking skills, and increase maturity and self-confidence. Such experience can also help heighten a student's cultural sensitivity. Put simply, an international education prepares U.S. citizens to live, work, and compete in the global economy. Studying abroad is also an effective way to promote the development of a peaceful global community, increase international trade, and create goodwill towards the United States.

Congress recognized the importance of studying abroad in 2004 when it established the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program. The Commission was tasked with formulating a national program that would dramatically increase the number of American students studying abroad each year. The Commission is scheduled to issue its recommendations on December 1 of this year. This resolution underscores the importance of the Commission's work and builds on the message of International Education Week, November 14 to 18, 2005.

The future challenges that face all nations will require an unprecedented degree of understanding and cooperation among countries and their leaders. The experiences and lifelong friendships that result from studying abroad can help foster mutual understanding between the future leaders of the world. Such relationships and cooperation are vital for a secure and prosperous future, not only for the United States, but for the entire world.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, without intervening action or debate.